

AN ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN FOR CIA

Introduction:

1. The fundamental requirement for an institutional environment is design. We live with the design of buildings earlier built. In the case of the Headquarters Building for instance the exterior of the building is an integrated design apart from whether it is a preferred design on the part of different individuals. Any modification of the basic design obviously should be the subject of extensive and careful study. The same is true for other Agency-owned installations.

The Campus:

2. The campus at Headquarters Building has evolved from a basic design submitted by Harrison and Abramovitz. In some cases we have violated that design. In other cases we have failed in maintenance. The campus is a live, growing thing and adjustments will be required as trees grow bigger, shrubbery becomes crowded and needs are recognized. There should be a strategy for the maintenance and enhancement of our campus based upon professional advice which is thoroughly studied and discussed with responsible Agency officials. A prudent application of limited funds on the basis of a long range strategy would likely insure an attractive environment at the most economic cost with the full view of the importance of preserving for the future.

3. Basic commitments with regard to space in the original design of any of our buildings may leave little flexibility. The treatment of the space has much. Through the use of professional advice and extensive consultation with the responsible officials in the Agency, CIA ten years ago decided on its current interior paint design. At that time the then Executive Director, Mr. Kirkpatrick, agreed that he would approve no changes in that design without first having a recommendation from the Fine Arts Commission. This was essentially the act of preserving what is believed to have been an integrated paint design. Changes that have been made have been brought about through the assistance of professional advice and on the FAC's recommendation to the Executive Director. Having the experience of ten years approximately with our design it is now proposed that this be generally used in CIA occupied buildings (two already completed are the Chamber of Commerce Building and Ames Building) with adaptations to meet peculiar circumstances.

Rugs:

4. On advice of Interior Space Design and after careful consideration, the FAC recommended a standard carpeting throughout the Agency. A decision was made and has remained for one carpet (at NSA executives may choose from eight or nine). The selection made was based upon its fitting into a grand design. Staying with the standard has been economical (as compared to multiple carpets) and has relieved middle and top management of being plagued with making decisions arising from a possible selection of colors.

Furnishings:

5. The Fine Arts Commission in cooperation with the Logistics Services Division has recommended a selection of furnishings from the Federal schedule, such selection being based on factors of size, cost, function, the propriety of design for the style of our building, and interior paint design. Some choice is permitted but not choice from the total Federal schedule. LSD is currently preparing a CIA furnishings schedule with copies to be placed in the hands of support officers, thus facilitating selection and ordering. By limiting the choice of fabric colors inventorying of furniture is possible while still allowing some selection. Availability of furnishings in inventory permits bulk buying and is cheaper than buying by special order and in a hurry, as always seems the case.

Sign Control:

6. The visual quality of environment not only rests on attractive treatment of space, color, and furnishings, but also on the absence of visual confusion. Signs are essential in a heavily populated and complex community. Eight years ago LSD recommended the establishment of sign control. This we have not yet achieved. It is not enough to name the place to go get a sign. On the books, that is GSA, and internally in CIA that is LSD. In addition, it has to do with the color, size, format, as well as necessity of the sign.

Factors Related to General Office Design:

7. Rust stains on linoleum and carpet:

a. Metal safes and cabinets when resting directly on vinyl tile and carpets due to humidity from the air or floor scrubbing produce rust on the tile. Throughout the Agency these rust stains are apparent and so far we have not found a chemical to remove the rust from the tile. The constant movement of the offices in the Agency and, therefore the safes, exposes many of these rust areas to view. At least as an interim measure masonite or equivalent should be placed under all such metal objects. A way to remove the defacement on the tile should be found.

8. Excess furnishings:

a. Almost every office has furniture that does not serve a functional need in that particular location. The removal of such furniture will relieve congestion providing the appearance of greater space. Such excess furniture exists in many cases because it was there when the present inhabitants moved in and no one has asked the question. In other cases congestion is produced by large grey costumers. An alternate more practical means of providing for this functional need has been recommended by the Fine Arts Commission. The Agency should carefully examine its needs and decide on solutions such as in the case of costumers, office bulletin boards, modesty panels for grey desks, along with a clear statement of furnishing standards, sign control. It then would be highly profitable to hold an environmental seminar for all support and administrative officers managed by the Office of Logistics and with the aid and assistance of the Agency's environmental consultant, [redacted] and the Chairman of the FAC. The gradual decentralization of good taste is essential as institutions get bigger. Along with this is the requirement to act promptly and knowledgeably in regard to housekeeping practices.

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9. The maintenance monster:

a. It is a sad fact that often the correction of one short-coming brings depredation to some environmental aspect. Thus, the waxing of floors enhances the floor and under current procedure spoils the wall paint or the paint on room doors and elevator doors. The correction of an air conditioning fault brings workmen's hand marks to the walls and ceilings. The rearrangement of partitions in an office produces scars on the walls in the hall where the partitions and doors are tentatively placed during reconstruction. The washing and buffing of floors is the occasion for an assault on walls and plaster by tank-like machines. Additional damage is incurred by the movement of over forty other different kinds of moving vehicles to support our needs. At the moment we are unsuccessful in training the personnel or devising a physical accouterment to the machine to ameliorate defacement. In order to avoid embarrassment in our toilets we have installed two toilet paper dispensers to insure that there will always be at least one roll available. However, the mechanism doesn't work well. Salvation rests on the customer's picking away at the paper, dropping the pieces on the toilet floor in so doing. Because we tolerate only one of four soap dispensers functioning we contribute to the malaise between the employees and the maintenance forces, meaning we live with what we dislike because we can't change it, and since management doesn't care why should we?

10. In the long view if we meet environmental problems by correcting them immediately and where necessary establishing and effectuating policies for middle management to follow, if we identify areas where long range planning is prudent and against which moderate budgeting annually can sustain us, and if we are alert to the need to change existing standards in the face of new developments (such as annual changes in the Federal schedule of furnishings) we will have gone far toward institutionalizing the essential ingredients for sustaining and enhancing our environment. In certain of these regards the FAC can provide the stimulus to Logistics by calling attention to needs and in some cases recommending solutions. It certainly should be charged to preserve the integrity of the environmental design with the use of professional assistance. There remains however the following problem and function:

Wall Hangings:

11. The mutilation of our walls through the use of scotch tape for hanging odds and ends from posters to cartoons and the littering of our walls with such things, plus calendars whether GI or Pan Am, is a clear indication of the human need to have something to look at in an office. The traditional solution usually induces visual confusion for lack of a strong center of interest, generally covering maximum amount of walls and lacking a sense of relationship between that which is on the wall and the furnishings as well as a sense of space about it. There is a clear indication from the persons requesting office help or office wall hangings to the FAC that people in general are aware of the inadequacy of their state, though usually make the error of thinking the solution lies in something colorful on the walls. Intelligently used such emphasis can help. In general the missing element is a sense of design, i.e., order. For the Map Library to provide wall hangings as groceries are provided at a grocery store will only as has been proved lead to a worsening environmental state. Though the immediate provocation is need for wall hanging and though the need ought be requited, the Agency must go further and provide counsel to the office to make the best of the circumstances faced by that office. Elements of the foregoing discussion now all come to bear in some degree. Wall hangings should be selected in terms of the general environment discussed above. There must be some variety from which to select. The object should be nurturing to the viewer. It must be easy to manufacture and cheap. Dispensing of wall hangings should be controlled since most often individuals prefer to cover all space which frustrates the desire for greater space. The investment in a wall hanging should be modest, and the hanging should be expendable, i.e., it should not be so valuable as to require registration, inventory, or expensive renovation.

Top Management Cooperation:

12. The decision to place the Fine Arts Commission as advisory to the Executive Director, the number three spot in the Agency, was correct. Such an arrangement provides a practicable means for the Executive Director to exercise influence over the environment. Furthermore, this arrangement keeps the Fine Arts Commission out of the line.

13. We are only now experimenting with a much needed improvement in communication between the Office of Logistics, the GSA building manager, and the Fine Arts Commission. Through the Office of Logistics we have started a monthly meeting of these three elements to discuss up coming needs or actions so that the respective parties are aware and have a chance to speak up if they see a problem in advance. The need for this was illustrated recently by the repainting of the perimeter fence. Six months ago the Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission noticed rusting of the fence and called the attention of the Office of Security to this fact. The Chairman of the Fine Arts Commission predicted that shortly the fence would be repainted aluminum. He requested that before any action was taken this matter be discussed with the Fine Arts Commission. This was not done and as predicted recently the fence was being repainted under contract. The Fine Arts Commission proposal was that the fence should be painted a color which would make it go away to the eye in as much as it seems important in the CIA to live with security but not to flaunt it. Belatedly we have finally gotten together on the fence problem and hopefully in the spring the black will be painted over the aluminum paint, now known to be a rust resistant requirement.